U.S. Offer to Sell F-18 Aircraft to India

3161. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of U.S. has recently offered to the Government of India to sell F-18 aircraft, a superior version of F-16 offered by the US to Pakistan simultaneously and also to assist India in the manufacture of F-18 aircraft; and

(b) if so, the details of two proposals, and reaction of the Government of India thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) On March 25, 2005, the US Under Secretary of Defence conveyed that US companies have received approval from the US Administration to respond to the Indian Request for Information (RFI) for the Multi Role Combat Aircraft.

(b) No decision has been made in this matter. Government will take decisions on defence related matters based on India's national interest.

Missing IFS Officers

†3162. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have received information regarding missing of several dozens of officers of "Indian Foreign Service" cadre and other cadres mysteriously who were working abroad for last few years;

(b) whether it is a fact that many officers among them have been in charge of highly sensitive matters related to the security of the country; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) There are no Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officers who are missing while posted abroad. Some cases of Support Staff and Security Guards on unauthorized absence have come to the notice of the Government.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Question does not arise.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.